



B'nai B'rith  
Senior Housing  
Network

<a href="#"><u>A Note From The Chair</u></a> .....	3	<a href="#"><u>On The Hill</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>A Note from the Co-Chair</u></a> .....	4	<a href="#"><u>What Has Staff Been Up To?</u></a> .....	6
<a href="#"><u>Spotlight on Community Partnerships</u></a> .....	3	<a href="#"><u>2020 Virtual Management Professionals and Service Coordinators Recap</u></a> .....	4

# SENIORITY REPORT

## Inform

We want to do our best to stay in touch with you. Please remember to send pictures and updates on the events in your building!

## Sign Up

Reading the Seniority Report is a great way to stay informed on what we are doing here at CSS as well as having a pulse on aging in general. To sign up for this resource simply [Click Here](#)

## Contribute

Want to contribute to the next issue of Seniority Report? Email us your own story or suggestions at: [seniorservices@bnaibrith.org](mailto:seniorservices@bnaibrith.org)

## Follow Us



**B'NAI B'RITH  
INTERNATIONAL**  
CENTER FOR SENIOR SERVICES

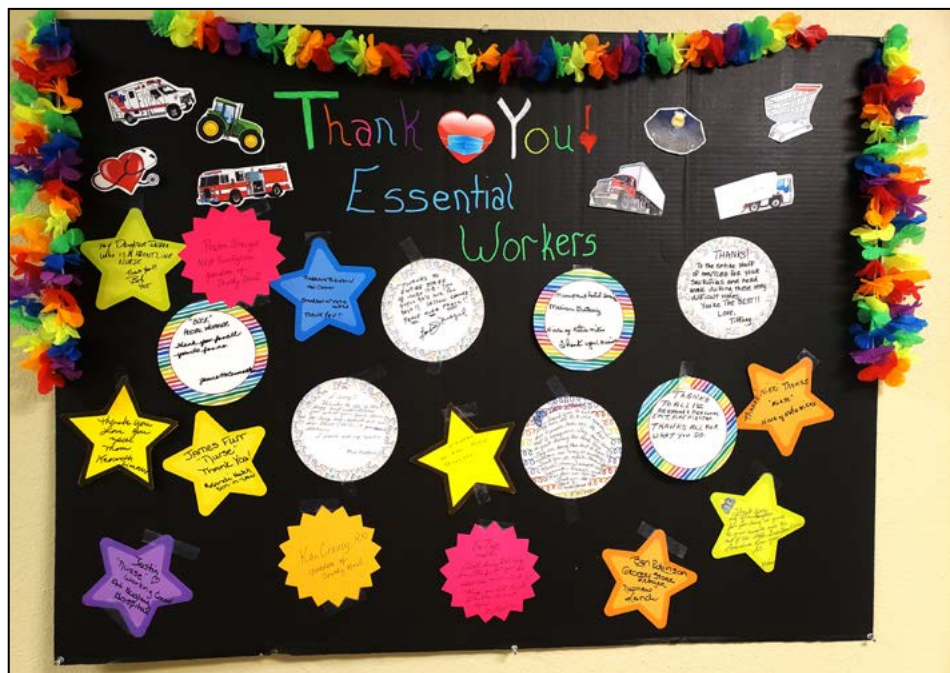
1120 20th Street, NW, Suite 300 North,  
Washington, DC 20036

[WWW.BNAIBRITH.ORG](http://WWW.BNAIBRITH.ORG)

EDITOR: Gracie Cohen

## The Power of Residents Giving Back

By: Gracie Cohen



The thank-you cards residents of Mollie & Max Barnett Apartments and Tarrant County B'nai B'rith Apartments in Fort Worth, Texas made for first responders in their community.

Residents of several B'nai B'rith Senior Housing buildings have been keeping busy during quarantine and giving back to their communities in this time of need.

What's behind the concept of giving back? To me, it's the heart and willingness to take action to serve folks who are in need: words of kindness, an item to maintain health and safety, or even connecting each other to community resources.



*continued on page 2*

## The Power of Residents Giving Back

*continued from page 1*

Obviously, there is an infinite list of reasons why individuals actively help out their communities. In this case, the acts of kindness stem from navigating this whirlwind of COVID-19, and in the goodness of residents in the B'nai B'rith Senior Housing network.

At Mollie & Max Barnett Apartments and Tarrant County B'nai B'rith Apartments in Fort Worth, Texas, residents created thank-you cards for first responders. The cards are on display in the building lobby.

Residents at Gerd & Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Pantano in Tucson, Arizona, have sewed over a hundred masks.

Residents, resident grandchildren, visitors, Fed Ex delivery drivers and students at their local elementary schools have received these home-made masks. Residents are also making baby hats and beanies for children in the hospital, and tote bags for children in foster care.

The power of residents giving back is that by helping out the community, we are all able to catch these moments of kindness and live a fuller, more quality life in the time of COVID-19.

If your residents have been volunteering to serve their communities, please send details to Gracie at [Gcohen@bnaibrith.org](mailto:Gcohen@bnaibrith.org) so we can showcase their work on our webpage, as well!



Dwanna Guffey (left) and Neonila Gertsovich (right) residents at Gerd & Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Pantano in Tucson, Arizona, sew masks to help serve their community.



A hand-made tote bag sewn and donated for children in foster care in the Tucson region.



Two baby beanies, sewn by residents at Gerd & Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Pantano.



## A Note From The Chair

By Marvin Siflinger

Hello all,

As everyone is aware, this summer has been different than years prior. Backyard barbecues, sports events, concerts and other fun social gatherings have been replaced by curbside picks for dinner, visiting grandchildren by waiving through the windows and social distancing. Certainly our B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services (CSS) was no exception.

Our Managers and Service Coordinators Meeting, originally scheduled for June in New Orleans, was postponed and held virtually in July through Zoom. Representatives of the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC), the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), consultants in the field of affordable housing and B'nai B'rith staff addressed our network on issues impacting affordable housing. Discussions focused on preparedness activities regarding COVID-19. Furthermore, I am pleased to report we are continuing to hold weekly Zoom calls for our managers and service coordinators that provide updated information from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and best practices for our buildings.

Throughout the pandemic, our advocacy efforts with congressional offices are holding strong. B'nai B'rith was proud to endorse The Emergency Housing Assistance for Older Adults Act of 2020 introduced in the Senate and House by Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., Rep. Katie Porter, D-C.A, and Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters, D-C.A.. It was great to see our support for the bill noted in Senator Menendez's press release introducing the legislation. These bills provide critical funding to HUD assisted senior housing as a response to the pandemic.

In addition, I can report that B'nai B'rith has used this summer as an opportunity to further our efforts to work with our sponsored buildings on their recapitalization and refinance needs. I want to extend a big "thank you" to Dennis Rice and the board at Deerfield Beach. Because of their refinancing efforts, they were able to make a generous contribution to B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services. Contributions like this allow us to continue our quality training programs and other affordable housing efforts. As always, if anyone has any questions about recapitalization or refinance, please reach out.

I am looking forward to "seeing" everyone virtually in a few days at the Annual Housing Conference. While we usually meet in person, CSS staff has put together a strong online program providing updates on the pandemic and HUD assisted senior housing, speakers who are industry experts and chances to network amongst each other. We believe this an invaluable opportunity for our community year after year, no matter the platform.

Lastly, and most importantly, I can't say thank you enough to our entire housing network for their outstanding work throughout the pandemic. Our managers, service coordinators, housekeeping and facility staff and have served admirably in our buildings ensuring the safety and well-being of residents.

See you in a few days!

Best,

Marvin

## Spotlight on Community Partnerships

By: Janel Doughten

Identifying and creating partnerships with local organizations and agencies in a building's community is an important part of managing a senior housing building. Community partners may include, but are not limited to, local food banks and farmers markets, hospitals, police and fire departments, colleges and universities, houses of worship, the local Area Agency on Aging, banks, grocery stores and even building vendors. Identifying and maintaining these relationships is the responsibility of both the staff and boards of directors. During the coronavirus pandemic, community relationships have taken on even greater importance. Many local governments and

programs that residents rely on have been suspended or are stretched thin due to the economic crisis. Additionally, with stay-at-home orders and difficulty paying for and even locating supplies such as toilet paper and cleaning supplies, the B'nai B'rith CSS network building staff and boards of directors have become very creative in finding solutions with their community partners to make sure the most vulnerable residents have the supplies that they need.

The staff at the B'nai B'rith Gerd and Inge Strauss B'nai B'rith Manor on Pantano in Tucson, Arizona, have been able

*[continued on page 4](#)*



## A Note from the Co-Chair

By Abbie Stone

Greetings All,

I hope everyone's been healthy during these unusually challenging times we have been experiencing. We are extremely grateful to the staff at Center for Senior Services, who have provided informed guidance for the entire B'nai B'rith housing community network weekly via Zoom. The weekly meetings offer opportunities for managers and service coordinators to join with their professional peers and share resources, strengths and challenges, which truly unified them in developing skills needed to navigate through the pandemic safely.

As a result of the unwavering dedication of the D.C. staff, Mark, Janel, Evan and Gracie, the weekly Zoom meetings resulted in an expanded partnership within local and national communities. Great acts of kindness and generosity are being exchanged in each of our communities amongst staff and residents alike, all the while practicing social distancing.

We are very lucky to have incredibly resilient and creative professionals on staff who continue to contribute to the quality of life for the individuals living in B'nai B'rith communities. Our communities have shared PPE supplies, exchanged ideas to stay connected, developed best practice to reach the vulnerable residents and continue to support each other through these unsettling times.

At Strauss Manor in Tucson, residents joined together to sew face masks for staff and other residents. In Fort Worth, Texas, the residents offered their gratitude to local heroes using their community's bulletin board to share this message. Both communities in Tucson partnered with the Area Agency on Aging and the CARES ACT and have been able to have a local restaurant deliver Kosher meals for residents two times a week.

It seems we have all been touched in some manner by the coronavirus. At the same time, we are all learning to adjust and cope with the pandemic, including shifting the venue for our annual Senior Housing Conference online this year. I am very much looking forward to seeing you all October 18-20 to learn from HUD experts and connect with each other.

A heartfelt thank you to the D.C. team, all the local managers and service coordinators for always being selfless and having compassion.

Warm regards,  
Abbie

### Spotlight on Community Partnerships

*continued from page 3*

to distribute emergency food and hygiene bags for residents through donations from the board of directors and the Tucson community, including United Healthcare. Staff and some resident volunteers helped sort and distribute these much appreciated bags on an on-going basis.

The B'nai B'rith Covenant House of Tucson I/II has continued to receive grants from the Bank of America to stock food and toiletries for residents. The food and toiletries pantry was highlighted in the Spring 2020 issue of the Seniority Report.

In August, in partnership with Illinois American Water, the Living to Serve Foundation, Inc. distributed 20 food baskets to residents of Sam J. Stone B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments I & II of Peoria, Illinois. Staff of the HyVee Grand Prairie grocery store put the baskets together and distributed them to 20 residents.

We want to thank all of the staff, boards of directors and their community partners for their continued support of the residents!

If you have a community partnership that you would like to highlight, please contact Janel Doughten [jdoughten@bnaibrith.org](mailto:jdoughten@bnaibrith.org).



Bob Baily a resident of Sam J. Stone B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments I, in Peoria, Illinois, receives his gift basket from a volunteer.



Onia Mack, a resident of Sam J. Stone B'nai B'rith Covenant Apartments II, is one of twenty residents to receive a gift basket from HyVee Grand Prairie grocery store in Peoria, Illinois.



# ON THE HILL



By *Evan Carmen*

## B'nai B'rith advocates for Section 202 COVID-19 Relief and Funding from Congress for FY 2021

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we have called on Congress and the White House to reach a bipartisan solution that provides desperately needed economic relief – especially financial resources – for seniors who rely on the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) assisted housing. While the money in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) is appreciated, it does not provide adequate funding to meet the challenges of the day. The Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act (HEROES Act) and the Emergency Housing Assistance for Older Adults Act of 2020 are important bills that secure funding for senior housing as a response to the coronavirus.

B'nai B'rith and the American Association of Service Coordinators have advocated strongly for additional COVID-19 stimulus legislation and amendments to the FY 2021 budget. Regarding FY 2021, the White House and Congress reached a short term deal to fund the government until December 11th. Negotiations for further funding will probably take place after Election Day. As of October 7th, a deal between Congress and the White House for additional stimulus legislation has not been reached. We met with staff members from the following offices:

### Senate

Edward Markey, D-Mass.  
 Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn.  
 Diane Feinstein, D-Calif.  
 Richard Shelby, R-Ala.  
 Tom Cotton, R-Ark.  
 John Boozman, R-Ark.  
 Richard Durbin, D-Ill.  
 Tom Carper, D-Del.  
 Chris Coons, D-Del.  
 Roy Blunt, R-Mo.  
 Marco Rubio, R-Fla.  
 Rick Scott, R-Fla.  
 Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis.

Pat Toomey, R-Pa.  
 Bob Casey, D-Pa.  
 Tammy Duckworth, D-Wis.  
 Doug Jones, D-Ala.  
 Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.  
 Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz.  
 Ted Cruz, R-Texas  
 John Cornyn, R-Texas  
 Chris Van Hollen, D-Md.  
 Ben Cardin, D-Md.  
 Ron Johnson, R-Wis.  
 Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

### Congress

Sylvia Garcia, R-Texas  
 Cheri Bustos, D-Ill.  
 Katherine Clark, D-Mass.  
 Kay Granger R-Texas  
 Susan Wild D-Pa.  
 Ayanna Pressley D-Mass.  
 Elliot Engel D-N.Y.  
 Scott Perry, R-Pa.  
 Andy Kim, D-N.J.  
 Donald Norcross, D-N.J.  
 Donald Payne Jr., D-N.J.  
 Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn.  
 Jamie Raskin, D-Md.

Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa.  
 Al Green, D-Texas  
 Ann Wagner, R-Mo.  
 Bruce Westerman, R-Ark.  
 Tony Cardenas, D-Calif.  
 Pete Aguilar, D-Calif.  
 Matt Cartwright, D-Pa.  
 Ann Kirkpatrick, D-Ariz.  
 Ted Deutch, D-Fla.  
 John Rutherford, R-Fla.

## B'nai B'rith Supports Emergency Housing Assistance for Older Adults Act of 2020

B'nai B'rith welcomed the introduction of a Senate and House bill that would provide financial resources for senior housing in response to COVID-19. We would like to extend our thanks to Senator Robert Menendez, D-N.J., Rep. Katie Porter, D-Calif. and Financial Services Committee Chairwoman Maxine Waters, D-Calif.,

for introducing the Emergency Housing Assistance for Older Adults Act of 2020. These bills allocate \$1.2 billion to senior housing, which will enable buildings to hire more staff, purchase more personal protective equipment (PPE) and deal with revenue losses due to decreased rent payments caused by the pandemic. This money also helps

advance service coordination, both for buildings that already have and those that do not yet have a service coordinator. The legislation additionally provides \$50 million in funding for increasing WiFi accessibility, a crucial service in an age of telehealth medicine. Better WiFi also would enable service

*continued on page 6*

## On The Hill

*continued from page 5*

coordinators to speak with building residents while practicing social distancing.

“As the coronavirus pandemic continues to take its toll on our communities and families, it has had a relentless, devastating impact on our nation’s seniors, especially elderly Americans living in facilities that struggled with lack of protection, staff and resources,” Menendez said. “Congress has an obligation to help our most vulnerable during this crisis and that means making sure our federally-assisted senior housing facilities have the necessary resources to effectively protect and ensure residents remain safe, healthy and have access to key services during the COVID-19 crisis.”

Furthermore, we are excited that Mark Olshan, associate executive vice president of B’nai B’rith, was quoted in Menendez’s press release that introduced the legislation. “B’nai B’rith International, as the largest national Jewish sponsor of low-income, nonsectarian housing for seniors in the United States, is uniquely aware of the

need to allocate additional financial resources for HUD senior housing in response to the COVID-19 crisis,” said Olshan. “Consequently, we are pleased to support the Emergency Housing Assistance for Older Adults Act of 2020 introduced by Senator Menendez. This legislation provides critical funding for senior properties to better meet challenges associated with the virus, including the ability to purchase more personal protective equipment, expand service coordination and WiFi accessibility. During a time of national crisis, we are thankful that Senator Menendez is leading the effort in the Senate to ensure that senior housing has the resources to combat the pandemic.”

### B’nai B’rith Interviews Rep. Grace Meng

In July, we were thankful that Rep. Grace Meng, D-N.J., spoke via Zoom with CEO Dan Mariaschin about how seniors in her Queens, New York, district, which includes B’nai B’rith of Queens, have been impacted by COVID-19. The discussion focused on

how the community is responding to the pandemic, what Meng has done to assist seniors and what another federal stimulus package would mean for older Americans. You can access the webinar [here](#).

### B’nai B’rith Speaks Out Against Payroll Tax Cut

B’nai B’rith International is disappointed President Trump signed an executive order cutting the payroll tax. As the revenue source for Social Security, any potential cuts to the payroll tax will erode one of our nation’s most important programs for seniors. As a staunch supporter of Social Security, we understand the critical role the program plays for older Americans. Social Security funding provides vital resources so seniors can afford housing, health care and nutrition. It must not be tampered with as a substitute for federal stimulus legislation.

We are proud to have issued a press release regarding this matter on August 10th. Check out the press release [here](#).

## WHAT HAS STAFF BEEN UP TO?

*By: Gracie Cohen*

On September 1, 2020, Janel and Evan virtually presented “Advocacy 101: Having Your Voice Heard” as part of the 2020 Virtual National Service Coordinator Conference.

Their presentation highlights how seniors can advocate on their own behalf for affordable housing, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, and other programs that impact

their lives. Janel and Evan discussed different strategies for advocacy, including writing and calling your elected representative, and inviting your elected representative to tour your building.

Janel and Evan are seasoned presenters on advocacy, and are regularly asked to present at various senior housing industry training conferences.

## 2020 Virtual Management Professionals and Service Coordinators Recap

By Gracie Cohen

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. On the left, a presentation slide titled "SPM Protocol Survey Results" is displayed. The slide contains three bullet points and a table. The table, titled "Were the protocols beneficial?", shows the following data:

Were the protocols beneficial?	Yes	No
Vulnerability Assessments	82%	18%
Wellness Checks	97%	3%
Social Calls	92%	8%

The video feed on the right shows Maria Medley, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue patterned top. The Zoom interface includes a top bar with "Recording" and "You are viewing Maria Medley's screen" indicators, and a bottom toolbar with icons for Mute, Start Video, Participants (49), Chat, Share Screen, Record, Reactions, and Leave.

Maria Medley, quality assurance director at SPM, shares the outcome of survey results covering resident vulnerability assessments, wellness checks, and social calls.

While COVID-19 safety precautions prevented management professionals and service coordinators from meeting in-person this year, we were able to come together virtually through Zoom for the 2020 Management Professionals and Service Coordinators training July 21-23. Attendees from our Senior Housing Network spanned locations throughout the U.S., in addition to a few attendees from outside of the network.

This year, presentations highlighted the impact of COVID-19 and new protocols for residents and staff. Guest speakers included Amanda Atkins, president of Atkins Consulting Professionals, who shared and discussed the following updates: 2020 HUD notices, fair housing during the pandemic, policy changes, evictions during the pandemic, and emergency preparedness during the pandemic.

We also welcomed back a previous guest speaker from our conferences: Jenefer Duane, Senior Program Analyst, Office for Older Americans, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Washington, DC. She shed light on new frauds and scams that have emerged during the pandemic in her "Money Smarts for Older Adults Update" presentation.

Other speakers included William Benson, principal, Health Benefits ABCs LLC, representing the National Adult Protective Services Association, who presented "Working With Adult Protective Services." Melissa Harris, director of government affairs, American Association of Service Coordinators, Tonya

Balducci and Maria Medley, quality assurance directors, SPM presented survey results and ideas on to engage residents, as well as how service coordinators must maintain professional boundaries with residents.

Janel, Evan, and Gracie shared their insight with the group, too. Presentations included a federal update, a facilitated discussion on how to unite residents in a polarizing climate, and a synopsis on trauma stewardship and self-care strategies for service-coordinators.

"This was my first conference with B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services. It was a fantastic chance to chat with other property managers and service coordinators at fellow B'nai B'rith apartments. Even though it was virtual, I still got the chance to ask questions and gain resources from experts in the field from the following organizations: HUD, Adult Protective Services, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and CSS staff," said Yvette Garwood, Property Manager at B'nai B'rith Chesilhurst House in Chesilhurst, New Jersey.

Missed any of these sessions? Want to see or re-visit any of these presentations again? You can now access the live recordings, download the presentations and handouts on our new Virtual Training page [here](#).

Be sure to check this page regularly as we continue to hold virtual trainings and seminars and upload onto this new page.